MASTERING ONLINE EDUCATION

A Guide to Success



For educators, tutors and course providers of online education



Contributions from
Nordic educators and
students in online courses



Tips and tricks from experienced practitioners



Results from the Norplus project "100% Online"

This handbook draws on research conducted across multiple educational institutions in four Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway, focusing on practical implementation rather than theoretical frameworks.



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INTRODUCTION

The New Frontier of Learning

Welcome to the exciting world of 100% online education — a realm of boundless possibilities where geography and point of time no longer limit learning, where flexibility meets rigor, and technology can enhance human connection.

Introduction: The New Frontier of Learning

Welcome to the exciting world of 100% online education — a realm of boundless possibilities where geography and point of time no longer limit learning, where flexibility meets rigor, and technology can enhance human connection.

Whether you're transitioning from traditional classroom settings or building your online teaching practice from the ground up, this handbook serves as your trusted companion. Drawing from extensive research and practical experiences across educational institutions and other providers of learning in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Norway, we have distilled insights and practical wisdom from educators and learners who have successfully navigated the challenges and opportunities of 100% online education.

The educational landscape is evolving rapidly, with the COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerating this transformation and pushing educators into online teaching with little preparation. Now, having had time to reflect and refine approaches, we can intentionally create engaging, effective online learning experiences that match—or even surpass—traditional classroom education.

This handbook isn't theoretical; it's deeply rooted in practice.

Every recommendation, strategy, and technique arises from real-life experiences of educators and learners who have explored, experimented, and refined their approaches to digital education.



Why 100% Online Education? The Nordic Perspective

Our project across four Nordic countries emphasizes the complexities and diversities inherent in 100% online education. Despite the differences, essential insights clearly emerge from Nordic pedagogical traditions, characterized by minimal hierarchical barriers, flat organizational structures, and strong learner autonomy. These traditions inherently foster active participation, critical thinking, and creativity, elements increasingly significant in today's digital learning contexts.

Learner autonomy—a cornerstone of Nordic pedagogy—empowers individuals to take responsibility for their educational journeys. In online environments, educators serve primarily as facilitators, guiding learners through inquiry-based and collaborative learning processes. Flat hierarchies enable inclusive and vibrant virtual communities characterized by dynamic discussions, mutual feedback, and genuine collaboration.

These pedagogical approaches enhance learners' critical thinking, curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving skills, equipping them to confidently address real-world challenges. Courses targeting specific qualifications may follow structured progression and formal assessments, whereas more general educational paths emphasize exploration, flexibility, and interdisciplinary approaches.

Educators in Nordic online education initiatives demonstrate deep commitment and creativity, continually developing innovative practices rarely achievable in traditional settings. This dedication fosters professional growth and pedagogical innovation.



Perspectives on 100% Online Education

Learners particularly value the flexibility and accessibility offered by online education, making it ideal for working professionals, parents, and individuals with special needs. The Nordic-inspired models support personalized learning pathways, allowing learners to progress at their own pace, revisit complex topics, and adapt strategies tailored to individual needs. Geographic barriers vanish, enabling broader educational access, especially critical for remote populations.

For educators, 100% online education means rethinking pedagogical strategies, promoting innovation through digital media, and enhancing competencies in digital literacy, instructional design, and data-driven decision-making. This process deepens educators' awareness of diverse learner needs, motivations, and accessibility concerns.

Education providers benefit significantly from the cost efficiency, scalability, and continuous improvement offered by data-driven learning analytics. Innovative online strategies like peer-to-peer feedback, gamification, and virtual labs foster interactive learning environments, appealing to diverse and international learner populations.

At the societal level, online education champions inclusivity, lifelong learning, and workforce readiness by overcoming economic and geographic barriers. Its adaptability is invaluable during crises, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yet, online education faces challenges such as digital divides, varying levels of learner self-discipline and time management skills, loss of face-to-face interactions, and issues related to motivation, networking, retention, and academic integrity. Addressing these requires structured engagement, credible assessment practices, and realistic expectations about continual accessibility.

As education rapidly evolves, the Nordic approach offers not a prescriptive model, but an inspiring contribution tailored to the needs of your learners, supporting the design of innovative, learner-driven experiences—hopefully also with a global perspective

This handbook invites you into a world of innovative, thought-provoking, and occasionally provocative learning formats. Its purpose is to inspire exploration, encourage critical questioning, and perhaps challenge your assumptions about education.

Throughout the handbook, you'll find practical cases and examples that reimagine the learning process. Use them as a starting point for reflection, dialogue, and experimentation with colleagues dedicated to creating flexible, engaging educational experiences.

For deeper insights and detailed contexts about each case and example, refer to the comprehensive report accompanying this handbook.

We hope you'll discover joy, inspiration, and the courage to experiment with new approaches to learning.

Enjoy!

Designing Your Online Learning Experience





Designing Your Online Learning Experience

Tailoring Your Approach to Student Needs

Creating an effective online learning experience begins with recognizing that there is no universal approach that fits all learners. Success in online education depends on carefully considering the characteristics of your target audience, the learning outcomes, and the institutional or professional context.

Research across various educational settings highlights three primary approaches to online learning, each with distinct strengths and best-use scenarios:

Table: Three Approaches to Online Education

| Approach | Q Primary Focus | Sest For | Key Characteristics |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Flexibility-First | Asynchronous learning with minimal or no required meeting times | Working adults, students with irregular schedules, self-motivated learners | Self-paced modules, comprehensive learning materials, clear deadlines |
| Collaboration- Centered | Synchronous sessions with substantial group work | Students seeking peer interaction, complex problem-solving skills, professional networking, possibilities for transformative learning experiences | Regular online meetings, breakout rooms, team projects |
| Balanced Hybrid | Mix of synchronous and asynchronous elements | Diverse student populations with varied needs | Live sessions, asynchronous work, multiple communication channels |



- I designed my course for ambitious learners who need flexibility but also structure. Many are working while studying, so I provide core materials on demand while scheduling optional live sessions for those who want deeper discussions

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Aligning Course Structure with Learning outcomes

The structure of your 100% online course should reflect its aims and its learning outcomes. Different types of courses require different formats to ensure that learners engage with the material in ways that maximize their understanding and skill development.

Types of courses:

- Knowledge-focused courses (concepts, theories, factual learning) are well suited for asynchronous content such as recorded lectures, readings, and quizzes.
- Skill-building courses (developing practical abilities) benefit from interactive elements like demonstration videos, hands-on practice, and structured feedback.
- Competency-based courses (applying knowledge and skills in real-world contexts) require problem-solving tasks, case studies, and authentic assessments.

Setting Clear Expectations for Learners

Clear communication is essential in online learning. Learners consistently report that knowing exactly what is expected of them improves their success and engagement. Clarity definitely supports engagement, whereas unclear structures can lead to frustration and drop-out. Thus establishing transparency from the start ensures that learners feel supported and confident in their learning journey.

Key Strategies for Setting Expectations:

- Develop a comprehensive 'Start Here' module that explains the course structure, technology requirements, and communication guidelines.
- Provide a visual course map that illustrates how modules connect and build upon one another.
- Use consistent deadlines (e.g., assignments due on the same day each week) to create a predictable rhythm.
- Design detailed grading rubrics for major assignments to clarify expectations and assessment criteria.



- When teaching accounting principles, I use recorded videos for fundamental concepts. However, I schedule live sessions for complex problem-solving so learners can work through challenging scenarios together.

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Continuous improvement

A success factor mentioned by many educators is continuous improvement. This understandably is included in all course design philosophies, but gets very concrete descriptions in our interviews.

Reflection Questions for Course Design

- What specific needs does your target learner population have that should influence your course design?
- How can you balance flexibility with structure to accommodate diverse learners?
- What are the most critical expectations learners need to understand before beginning your course?
- How will you collect feedback from the learners?

Technology Integration





Technology Integration

Choosing the Right Digital Tools

Technology is of course the scaffold of online learning, and the bare minimum is the distribution of learning materials with clear and accessible communication channels . Technology should serve your teaching goals, not dictate them. The most successful online educators select tools based on pedagogical needs rather than novelty or complexity.

-You need to choose the right tool to support what you want to achieve. The user experience, the user interface, is important. It needs to be easy for the student to navigate.

COURSE DESIGNER

Learning platform / Learning Management System / Virtual Learning Environment

It is possible to conduct online teaching and training without a dedicated learning platform, but in this project this was never the case. There is a plethora of learning platforms designed for big universities and small independent online schools. But also systems designed primarily for the workplace, like Microsoft Teams, are used with success.

Important features in the learning platform:

- Intuitive navigation that helps students find materials quickly
- Consistent structure across modules or units they don't need to be identical, but should have the same logic to them. Most learning platforms will let you build courses, "rooms" and modules from templates.
- Mobile-friendly design for students accessing content on different devices.
 The learning platform probably is mobile friendly, but one tip is to check how the content in learning materials like videos and powerpoints comes through on a smaller screen.
- Integrated communication tools that facilitate instructor-student and student-student interaction. Learning platforms will contain simple tools like chats and discussion forums, but can also integrate with more advanced tools like email and videoconferencing.

Ask yourself, or even better; ask your learners: where they prefer/expect to:

- 1. find urgent and dynamic information about the course, such as the change of an assignment or an upcoming tutoring session
- 2. find more static information, such as timetables and information about exams
- 3. communicate with the educators
- 4. communicate with each other



- When you add new and fantastic content, remove the old or less relevant, so that the students don't get confused or overwhelmed.

COURSE DESIGNER

Beyond the Learning Management System

While your LMS (Learning Management System) forms the backbone of your online course, you might need to consider supplementing it with targeted tools for specific needs. But be aware that all tools you share with the learners need to be accessible, universally designed, and GDPR-compliant.

Successful educators also use technology to create, or adapt, engaging learning material. Videos and animations and even texts can be made interactive by adding quizzes, questions and exercises.

Quick Wins for Technology Integration:

- 1. On your learning platform, test your material from your learners' point of view, including on mobile phone and in "student mode"
- 2. Create short tutorial videos for any technology the learners will need to use. These can be very simple, one-take, screen recordings.
- 3. Start with a minimal viable set of tools and add more only when necessary. Keeping it simple is better than redundancy.
- 4. Mix open licence content like quality videos and animations or podcasts with reflection tasks, quizzes, or just provide a brief context description to make it relevant for your learners.

When Technology Fails: Backup Plans

- Even the best technology sometimes fails. Successful online educators have backup plans:
- Provide alternative submission methods for assignments.
- Record synchronous sessions for students experiencing connection issues.
- Maintain emergency contact information outside the LMS.
- Schedule "technical support office hours" before deadlines for major assignements.



Reflection Questions:

- What are the essential technological functions needed for your course objectives?
- How can you minimize the learning curve for students unfamiliar with educational technology?
- What backup plans would be most appropriate for your specific course context?

Engaging Students in Virtual Environments



Engaging Students in Virtual Environments

Creating Presence in Digital Spaces

100% online courses offer a variety of forms for interaction between participants and educators. In some cases, the course is self-paced, and the learner works through the course alone, without any interaction with others. In other cases, interactions between educators and learners are seen as vital for student motivation and completing the course. In other cases, other participants and collaboration with them is seen as a vital part of the value the course offers. In such courses one of the biggest challenges is combating the sense of isolation participants sometimes feel.

Successful educators cultivate three types of presence:

- 1. Educator presence: Demonstrating that you're actively involved and accessible
- 2. Social presence: Facilitating connections between students
- 3. Cognitive presence: Stimulating intellectual engagement with course material

Student engagement in virtual environments requires intentional design and consistent educator presence. By developing strategies for both asynchronous and synchronous engagement, cultivating multiple forms of presence, and creating opportunities for meaningful interaction, you can create an online learning experience that captures and maintains student interest.

- In my digital teacher education program, I make myself highly visible through personalized feedback, weekly update videos, and responsive communication.

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Students have even commented that they feel more connected to the teacher and each other in this online environment than they did with instructors in traditional classrooms.

Strategies for Asynchronous Engagement

When teaching asynchronously, consider these proven approaches:

- 1. Create brief informal weekly overview/wrap-up videos featuring yourself.
- 2. Use audio/video feedback on assignments instead of just written comments.
- 3. Design discussion prompts that require students to relate course concepts to personal experiences.
- 4. Incorporate interactive elements like embedded quizzes in instructional videos.

- Just start doing the videos at once, they don't need to be very good at first, use your mobile camera and test it out and get the experience. Done is better than perfect. Less polished videos can be good for relation building.

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As for the content in the videos: she said "there is no need to have long introductions to the subject matter. Be as to the point as possible." But of course, the teacher's reflections around matters can be of great help. She likes to use humour to reduce anxiety students might have, and motivate them. She calls these little videos "video vitamins".

Asynchronous and self-paced

Many organisations use asynchronous, self-paced courses to deliver important information to all staff or specific groups of the staff. Such courses need to be compact, and extremely clear. Employees at the Icelandic Aviation Authorities who need to take a number of such courses find clarity and brevity of the content the most important success factors. They also add that some aspects of fun make taking the course more interesting. Interestingly they also acknowledge that they do need to organize themselves to be able to concentrate on the content.

Maximizing Synchronous Session Value

If your course includes synchronous elements, make them count: Effective Synchronous Session Strategies:

- Limit lecture components to 10-15 minute segments (you might even consider flipping the classroom, i.e. delivering the lectures through video and using synchronous sessions only for collaboration and discussions).
- Use breakout rooms for small group discussions or problem-solving.
- Incorporate interactive tools like polls, shared documents, or digital whiteboards.
- Establish clear participation norms (camera use, muting protocols, etc.).

- It's [...] essential to provide students with good instructions in advance. Recipes, shopping lists, and descriptions of the work stages are sent well in advance, and students could be asked, for example, to peel the potatoes before the teaching session.

EXAMPLE OF THOROUGH PREPARATION FROM A HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATOR

She also uses multiple camera angles so students can see detailed techniques. Moreover, she has developed a system of emoji signals so she can know when everyone is ready to move forward.

Based on the nature of the course and the skills to develop, thorough preparation, with a view on what is most useful to do in real time with the participants is of essence.

Reflection Questions:

- What strategies could you implement to increase your visibility as an instructor in your online course?
- How might you create meaningful student-to-student interaction in your specific course?
- What balance of structure and spontaneity would best serve your course objectives?

Remember that engagement isn't about entertainment—it's about creating conditions where students actively participate and get opportunities to train skills, and develop ways to apply course content to their own life.

Effective Assessment in Online Courses





Effective Assessment in Online Courses

Rethinking Assessment for Digital Contexts

Traditional exams don't always translate well to online formats, but online education offers unique opportunities to move beyond traditional testing approaches. The most successful programs implement diverse assessment strategies that emphasize authentic application and continuous feedback.

Assessment design can significantly influence the learning behaviours—what you measure is what the learners will prioritize.

- It is important that feedback is provided – not only in the professional realm but also if there are indications that a participant has special problems or difficulties

COURSE DESIGNER

Balancing Formative and Summative Assessment

Effective online courses typically feature:

- 1. **Low-stakes formative assessments** that provide regular feedback and learning opportunities
- 2. **Milestone assignments** that build toward larger projects
- 3. Authentic summative assessments that demonstrate mastery in context

Wins for Online Assessment

Unfortunately, there are not many quick wins for online assessment, but there is a lot to be gained by following these suggestions:

- 1. Implement peer review for draft submissions using a structured and unambiguous feedback protocol. Online learning is often adult learning, meaning the learners often have valuable experience.
- 2. Use screen recording tools to provide visual and auditory feedback on student work.
- Develop online portfolios that showcase student progress throughout the course. These can contain text, but also video, sound and other digital products.

And one Quick Win:

- 4. Create automated self-check quizzes that students can retake multiple times. Large Language models like ChatGPT are helpful for writing questions.
- The teacher should design clear learning assignments and create unambiguous instructions.

STUDENT

Academic Integrity in Digital Environments

With the rise of AI tools and the challenges of remote proctoring, many educators are redesigning assessments to naturally discourage academic dishonesty.

Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity, that can also enhance the exam as a learning experience:

- Design assessments requiring personal reflection or application.
- Implement project options allowing students to choose topics of interest.
- Use authentic assessments tied to real-world scenarios.

Reflection Questions:

- How might you redesign traditional assessments to better suit the online environment?
- What opportunities exist in your course for more authentic, application-based assessment?

Building Community Online





Building Community Online

Fostering Connection Despite Distance

A sense of community is central to student engagement, student retention and social learning, and research shows it's essential for student motivation, persistence, and learning.

However, creating a sense of community online is often challenging. Building community in online courses requires intentional design and consistent facilitation. By implementing structured community-building activities, creating opportunities for meaningful collaboration, addressing diversity proactively, and modelling engaged participation, you can foster a sense of connection despite physical distance.

Structured Community-Building

Successful online educators don't leave community to chance — they build it deliberately:

Quick Wins for Community Building:

- 1. Create a dedicated social forum for non-course discussions.
- 2. Implement structured introduction activities beyond basic text posts.
- 3. Help students to get acquainted through cooperation in synchronous meetings with many short group activities with students meeting different students in each group session.
- 4. Form stable small groups for recurring collaborative work.
- 5. Schedule optional virtual "coffee hours" for informal interaction.
- 6. Create regular informal "check-up" videos featuring educators

Many educators indicated that they initiated group work and supported the establishment of fixed groups often encouraging students to form their own groups based on shared interests or complementary skills. This can significantly increase well-being in the course, reduce conflicts and improve collaborative outcomes.

Navigating Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Online courses often bring together students from diverse backgrounds, creating both opportunities and challenges:

Strategies for Inclusive Community:

- Provide multiple participation options (text, audio, video).
- Establish clear communication norms while respecting cultural differences.
- Create meaningful opportunities for students to share their unique perspectives and experiences.
- Be explicit about expectations while remaining flexible about cultural approaches to learning.

-In our aviation safety training, we translate all materials into multiple languages and use local examples and images from the employee's actual workplaces. This significantly increases engagement as participants see themselves and their work environments represented in the content.

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Reflection Questions:

- What specific community-building activities would be most appropriate for your course content and student population?
- How might you balance structure and spontaneity in fostering an online community?
- What measures could you take to ensure all students feel included in your virtual classroom?
- Remember that strong learning communities don't just happen—they result from deliberate planning and ongoing cultivation.

Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them





Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them

Addressing Student Motivation and Time Management

Online learning requires significant self-regulation—a skill many students are still developing.

- The flexibility that makes online learning attractive can also be its biggest challenge. Some students struggle to create and maintain a regular study schedule without the external structure of classroom meetings.

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Strategies to Support Self-Regulation:

- Create a detailed course schedule with recommended study times.
- Implement regular deadlines rather than all assignments being due at term's end.
- Send proactive check-in messages to students who fall behind.
- Provide time management tools and templates.
- Managing workload for Instructors

Online teaching can be more time consuming than classroom instruction, especially because it does not offer the same boundaries.

Quick Wins for Educator Workload Management:

- 1. Establish and communicate "office hours" for responding to student questions.
- 2. Create reusable feedback templates for common assignment issues.
- 3. Develop clear communication protocols (which channels for which purposes).
- 4. Schedule specific times for course management rather than constantly checking in.

- I tend to create too many assignments. I advise you to consider if each task genuinely contributes to learning, if it really is necessary, and how much time students will need to complete it. And how much time does it take for you to assess it and/or give feedback on it?

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- I initially tried to be available 24/7, which was unsustainable. Now I've established clear response timeframes, created comprehensive FAQ resources, and developed templates for common feedback scenarios. This provides better support for students while protecting my time.

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Technical Challenges and Accessibility

Technical difficulties can frustrate both educators and learners, but proactive approaches minimize disruptions.

Technical Support Strategies:

- Create troubleshooting guides for common issues.
- Establish a peer support forum where students can help each other.
- Provide alternative participation options when technology fails.
- Consider accessibility needs when selecting tools and designing materials.
- We discovered many participants struggled with the original platform. After switching to a more intuitive system and creating step-by-step guides with screenshots, technical support requests decreased by over 60%.

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Reflection Questions:

- What specific self-regulation challenges might your learners face, and how could you address them?
- How might you establish sustainable boundaries while remaining accessible to learners?
- What technical challenges are most likely in your specific course, and how could you prepare?
- Remember that many challenges can be anticipated and addressed before they become problems—prevention is often easier than remediation.

Conclusion: Your Online Teaching Journey

As we conclude this handbook, remember that mastering online education is an ongoing journey rather than a destination. The most successful online educators approach their craft with curiosity, flexibility, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

The landscape of digital learning continues to evolve, with new technologies, pedagogical approaches, and student needs emerging regularly. Yet the fundamental principles remain consistent: clarity of expectations, meaningful engagement, intentional community-building, and alignment between objectives, activities, and assessments.

Your journey as an online educator will be unique, shaped by your discipline, institutional context, student population, and personal teaching philosophy. Embrace this individuality while drawing on the collective wisdom of those who have navigated similar paths.

Start small, experiment often, solicit feedback consistently, and celebrate your successes along the way. Remember that behind every screen is a real person with hopes, challenges, and aspirations. Your thoughtful design and authentic presence can transform a collection of digital materials into a transformative learning experience.

The future of education is increasingly digital, but the heart of great teaching remains deeply human. As you develop your approach to online education, keep this balance in mind—leveraging technology to enhance rather than replace the human connections at the core of meaningful learning.

Now, take what you've learned, adapt it to your context, and create online learning experiences that engage, challenge, and inspire. Your students—and the future of education—are waiting.





Appendix 1: Asynchronous or Synchronous learning

| | Synchronous learning | Asynchronous learning |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Flexibility vs Collaboration | Synchronous learning emphasizes real-time interaction and collaboration. It involves scheduled online meetings where students and instructors participate at the same time, for example group work and instructor guidance. | Asynchronous learning prioritizes flexibility, allowing participants to study at their own pace and on their own schedule. This is particularly beneficial for working adults or those with other commitments. |
| Target Audience: | Synchronous learning may be more suitable for students who thrive in a collaborative environment and appreciate the structure and support of scheduled sessions. | Asynchronous learning is often preferred by students who need to balance their studies with work, family, or other obligations. It caters to individuals who are self-directed and can manage their time effectively. |
| Structure and Delivery: | Synchronous learning may involve live lectures, presentations, and demonstrations. Instructors play a more active role in guiding discussions and providing direct answers to questions. | Asynchronous learning relies heavily on pre-recorded materials, such as videos, texts, and assignments, available on a learning platform. Instructors often provide support through written feedback or occasional digital meetings. |



Appendix 2: What are the challenges - and what can you do about them?

| The challenges | and what to do |
|---|--|
| Time and Resource Constraints Educators may lack sufficient time and resources for course development and refinement. | Invest time in production and development of online materials. Seek and use feedback to refine the course concept. Prioritize tasks and materials, focusing on quality over quantity to avoid overwhelming both learners and educators. |
| Maintaining Clarity and Managing Expectations It can be challenging to ensure that learners clearly understand the expectations for different assignments and the overall course structure. This is particularly relevant for programs structured differently than traditional education. | Ensure clear communication of deadlines and expectations for assignments. Provide a clear and well-structured framework for the course. Offer a preparatory course or orientation to help learners understand the program structure and expectations. |
| Student Engagement and Motivation Educators may find it difficult to keep online learners engaged and motivated. The online format can feel monotonous, placing higher demands on engaging materials and active participation. Some learners may struggle with time management and self-discipline, leading to inactivity. | Incorporate small, interesting learning elements to stimulate curiosity. Use varied and high-quality materials, including video-based content, even short personal video messages. Create opportunities for collaboration and interaction among students. Make tasks enjoyable and interactive, adjusting content to improve learning outcomes. Provide frequent encouragement and positive feedback. Maintaining clarity and managing expectations |
| Technical Issues and Support Technical issues can arise, and educators may not notice them as easily as in traditional teaching. Providing timely and effective technical support to learners can be challenging, especially with limited resources | Choose the right platform and ensure necessary technical support is available. Create videos to address common technical support needs. Provide easy and quick access for learners to contact educators with questions. |

| The challenges | and what to do |
|---|--|
| Assessing Learner Progress and Providing Feedback It can be difficult to assess learners' progress and provide personalized feedback in an online environment. Educators may need to develop new methods for evaluating learners' work and ensuring that feedback is timely and relevant. | Provide oral and written feedback throughout the course. Offer peer feedback on assignments to improve learners' ability to describe their practice. Design assignments that capture learners' attention and provide a sense of accomplishment. Use short, encouraging comments to make written feedback feel more positive. Ensure educators respond promptly to submitted assignments. |
| Adapting to Diverse Student Needs Learners come from diverse backgrounds and have varying levels of prior knowledge, making it challenging to accommodate everyone. Educators must be flexible and adapt their teaching methods to meet the individual needs of their learners. | Offer personal learning paths through the education, tailored to individual needs. Critically assess whether pre-designed materials are sufficient for learning and report issues for adjustments. Acknowledge diverse backgrounds of participants and create a familiar and relatable environment. |
| Lack of Control Over Content In some programs, educators may not have control over what is taught, or which materials are used. This can be frustrating for educators who want to customize the course to meet the specific needs of their learners. | Encourage feedback from educators to designers and subject coordinators for possible adjustments of the material. |



| The challenges | and what to do |
|--|--|
| Balancing Flexibility and Structure Educators must strike a balance between providing flexibility and maintaining a clear structure. While flexibility is important for adult learners, too much flexibility can lead to learners feeling lost or overwhelmed. | Provide a clear and well-structured framework. Offer programs asynchronously or synchronously to allow for flexibility and collaboration. |
| Staying Current with Technology Educators need to continuously update their skills and knowledge of online learning technologies and pedagogies. This includes understanding how to use new tools and platforms effectively and how to integrate them into their teaching. | Establish internal professional development programs. Learn from colleagues and experiment with new approaches. Participate in (online) courses. Create diverse teams that can develop and share enthusiasm, experience and innovation. |
| Online Ethics Educators feel responsible for online ethics and for the online behavior of their learners. | Ensure educators focus on online ethics, including behavior and conduct. |